

## **Castletown Town Commissioners**

### **Ordinary Board Meeting Minutes**

July 1, 2019

**Present:** Mr McAleer (Chairman), Miss Quine & Messrs. Cubbon, Horton, Leather & Ludford-Brooks & Parnell

Also, in attendance the Town Clerk, Mr Mackenzie

#### **AB/018.19 Chairman's Statement**

Mr McAleer welcomed members to the meeting. He was pleased to see members of the Press and Minister Cregeen in attendance.

#### **AB/019.19 Approval of minutes from last meeting**

Miss Quine proposed that the minutes of the meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> June 2019 be approved as read. This was seconded by Mr Ludford-Brooks with all in favour. The minutes were duly approved.

#### **AB/020.19 Matters Arising**

Mr Leather stated that representatives from the festival were still to meet with the organisers of the National Cycling event planned for the 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

Mr Horton expressed his frustration at the reporting of the proposed Coach Layby alterations in the Press. There appeared to have been some misunderstanding of the intention and no clarification had been sought.

Mr Leather expressed concerns regarding the costs associated with Manx Telecom as it had come to his attention that calls made to IOM or UK mobiles or lines were costing 40p a minute.

Mr Ludford-Brooks had attended Armed Forces Day. He was extremely disappointed at the turnout from local authorities, MHK's and the General Public.

#### **AB/021.19 Approval of Accounts**

The Clerk circulated accounts for payment.

Miss Quine proposed that the accounts be approved as detailed. This was seconded by Mr Parnell with all in favour. The accounts were duly approved.

#### **AB/022.19 Correspondence**

A circular was received from the RTLC and duly noted.

### **AB/023.19      Consultations**

It was agreed that members would submit their individual views to any consultations deemed relevant via the Consultation Hub. The Clerk informed members of the live consultations.

### **AB/024.19      Planning Matters & Decisions**

The Following Planning matters and applications were considered:

19/00690/B      Conversion from office to restaurant (Class 3) and a self-contained residential unit Harbour Mews

19/00696/B      Installation of replacement front door Eastfield 58 Queen Street

19/00679/B      Siting of existing Captain Quilliam statue with associated base and plinth Land West ff Foot Bridge Castlegate

19/00614/B      Installation of replacement windows to front elevation 4 Bank Street

19/00618/B      Alterations, erection of two storey extension to side elevation and repositioning of a flue (amendment to PA 19/00258/B) 60 Scarlett Road

19/00621/B      Installation of a replacement dormer window to front elevation 7 College Green

Mr Cubbon proposed that the Board write a letter of support in respect of application 19/00690/B

This was supported and seconded by Mr Leather with all in favour.

### **AB/025.19      Planning Matters & Decisions**

Mr Cubbon brought forward a notice of motion, the text of which is reproduced below.

*I wish to raise this as a notice of motion to write to the Chief Minister to express my grave concerns relating to the Castle Rushen High School redevelopment and adjacent land:*

*I have sat on this for over six months to give Minister Cregeen and the Department of Education ample opportunity to progress the new school and yet we are still mushrooms in the dark. Eddie Teare in the last Tynwald stated that Castle Rushen High School was no longer fit for purpose. I have heard tales of buckets catching water leaking in through the roof yet there seems to be no urgency whatsoever from Minister Cregeen or the Department of Education to expeditiously progress the replacement of the school with a state of the art educational facility. My children and every child in the south is being discriminated against having the best education they can at a state school. Tynwald and government can play with lots of aspects of Island life, but needlessly offsetting a young person's one chance at a quality education is wholly unacceptable. Having done some research as I do, I can surmise nothing but political gamesmanship holding the project back. I do not make sweeping statements without basis and I wish for the board to consider the following:*

*We as board members are temporary occupants of the seats at this table, they do not belong to us, we are entrusted by the people of Castletown to perform our duty and to do everything in our power to pass Castletown on to future boards in a better state than we received it. We must consider every aspect, the jigsaw pieces that come together to complete this great town, both now, short term and long into the future. The town may rue mistakes made or opportunities missed now for the rest of time.*

*Martin Sewell, employed by central government as a retail expert stated that Castletown losing the Tesco store opportunity is the biggest mistake the town will ever make. Castletown's retail sector may never again have such an opportunity. We as board members must pro-actively consider all opportunities for the town so we're not left talking about it once the horse has bolted.*

*Chief Minister Howard Quayle in 2016 spoke of removing departmental 'silo' mentalities and improved working between central and local government. To date, I see little evidence of this in practice. The Department of Infrastructure's recent Castletown Square bus stop planning application is the latest instance of this not happening.*

*In 2017 Department of Home Affairs Minister Malarkey sought to sell the Castletown Fire Station site privately for a departmental quick win. We as a board felt strongly that Minister Malarkey was not considering the holistic implications for the future of Castletown, particularly the provision of parking spaces and the retail recovery of the town centre. We wrote to the Chief Minister strongly expressing our concerns and related it to his vision as stated. Castletown Commissioners as a result gained control of the site and now have a strong say in determining the positive future of this service town.*

*Mr Richard Ronan recognised the unique housing issues affecting Castletown and as MHK, fought for the town to have its own housing review having been brushed over by the southern area plan. We as a board pushed the Cabinet office to complete this crucial review after it was put on the back burner. Now completed, this government*

*endorsed, cabinet issued plan identified the current school site and playing fields and the land to the rear of the school as 'being suitable for further consideration (as Strategic Reserve Sites Only)'.*

*I understand that former Treasury Minister Eddie Teare was keen on the redevelopment of the Castle Rushen high school site to include a housing development with the funds raised contributing hugely towards the infrastructure costs of the new school. Hartford Homes previously submitted a detailed proposal to the Cabinet Office to develop the high school site in conjunction with the new school.*

*Castletown must have new houses built before the service village of Ballasalla. I stand to be corrected but with a static population this large development in Ballasalla will reduce the demand for houses in Castletown and will likely reduce developers appetite to build houses.*

*Mr Cregeen sat at this table in 2017 and stated 'it's not moving, it's my school'. When questioned, he would not provide an explanation. He has recently stated that the new playing fields would be developed on the fields adjacent to the current school, then the new school would built on the existing playing fields with the existing school then being demolished. There is no detail as to how the new school would be accessed by road and what would happen to the current school foot print. It would appear there is a huge area of land left over that surely could be utilised for an access road and/ or development land, future proofing Castletown.*

*By not allowing or considering an access road through the existing school grounds, Mr Cregeen individually is essentially ensuring that sites 14 and 15 will never be developed even though they are deemed suitable by a government approved plan. Castletown was land locked for decades and the detrimental effect this had on the town is plain for all to see. Port Erin has been become the main service town for the south and Castletown's young people live in Port Erin. We must future proof all suitable sites, perhaps not for in twenty years time, but one hundred years time, as once it's gone, it's gone.*

*Minister Cregeen's election manifesto referred to charging large developments with an infrastructure levy. There is no mistaking that Mr Cregeen's statement relates to the Ballasalla by-pass. Emily Curphey has previously stated the bi-pass is not necessary and is future proofing, yet he supports a three hundred plus housing development, around two hundred more than Ballasalla needs according to the Southern Area Plan on the basis that the developer will build the road. The Minister is clearly then open to private investment improving the south's infrastructure contrary to aspects of government policy. In an email in February 2018, relating to Ballasalla by-pass, he stated 'if the developer does not put the road in are you suggesting government should?'*

*An online article in September last year had the headline 'Plans for a £30 million school under way', relating to Castle Rushen. £30 million with no consideration for an infrastructure levy, yet in the same article Minister Cregeen was quoted saying*

*"We might need a new primary school, there are houses being built. It could be Castletown or Ballasalla. It's chicken and egg, which comes first? And how do we fund it? Should there be an infrastructure levy on developers who build large estates so large they impact the community and infrastructure"? The article further stated that the old school site would be used as car parking or as open space.*

*Yet, his stance on the Ballasalla bypass and new primary school and infrastructure levies is completely contradictory to his stance on the redevelopment of the Castle Rushen site. It is entirely reasonable that he should consider some aspect of private development on the Castle Rushen site, an access road, and/ or housing. Surely he is duty bound to reduce the financial burden on the Manx people where possible. The developer could for example fund the road access to the new school. So why is this not being considered, when it is the Minister's own manifesto that supported such actions? Minister Cregeen has not once provided any rationale for his decision to block off sites 14 and 15. In my former employment, every decision was recorded, with rationale being provided along with details of justification, proportionality and absolute necessity. There is no evidence of this here, with the Minister having been asked and in 2018 this is unacceptable. New houses will bring more people into the town, with more rate money for services, more people spending giving traders confidence to have a go, which will create employment. Yet there appears to be no consideration for the greater impact on the town from our own MHK or interest from the Council of Ministers.*

*I can reasonably understand Mr Malarkey making decisions not in the best interest of Castletown, but for the MHK of Castletown to make narrow minded decisions, without considering or caring for the greater future of the town is wholly unacceptable. I honestly cannot think of one positive action Mr Cregeen has taken for the town. I am often told how powerful Minister's are. Minister Cregeen doesn't appear to be accountable to anyone. A dictatorship and autocracy springs to mind and is defined as a ruler who has absolute power, taking no account of other people's wishes or opinions; domineering. This is how Minister Cregeen seems able to act and he must be challenged by us, the representatives of the people of Castletown.*

*Minister Cregeen was recently reported to have stated "Because of the exposed location, we can't have one of these steel clad buildings because it will weather in winter in that position. These are all bits and pieces we've got to be fully aware of". Yet the proposed Hartford Homes development would shelter the school from the prevailing weather conditions. Having attended Castle Rushen High School, the extreme winds render the current sports pitches useless for many a winters day. Surely these factors are being considered.*

*I am absolutely behind the redevelopment of Castle Rushen High School as a state of the art educational facility and I hope the young people of the south and the greater community gets the future proofed quality facility we deserve.*

*I work with openness and transparency, fact and evidence and am astonished and hugely disappointed with this shambles of inconsistencies and lack of rationalised*

*decision making in the best interests of Castletown. I trust that you as board members are as frustrated and bemused as I am and ask that you provide your own thoughts on the matter.*

*I ask that you support me in writing to the Chief Minister asking him to ensure that this matter is given the full, holistic consideration that it deserves to assist us in doing our absolute best, with full integrity for Castletown, its people, its young people and the young people of the south.*

Mr Leather proposed an amendment that the Board request a meeting be held with both of the Towns MHK's. This was seconded by Mr Horton.

Miss Quine stated that she felt there has been a clear timeline with regard the progress for the redevelopment of CRHS.

A vote took place with All members with the exception of Mr Cubbon voting in support of Mr Leathers amendment and it was duly carried.

The Clerk was to invite members to the next Board in Committee Meeting

**AB/026.18      Matters for future discussion**

- Mr Ludford-Brooks wished to see a publicly accessible defibrillator in the vicinity of Lloyds Bank

The Meeting Closed at 19.32